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ABSTRACT

MOST OF THIS 10TH-GRADE TEACHING UNIT ON ROBINSON'S
 "RICHARD CORY" IS MADE UP OF SAMPLE TEACHER QUESTIONS AND STUDENT
 ANSWERS WHICH LEAD STUDENTS TO THINK ABOUT VALUES. OTHER SECTIONS
 INCLUDE DEFINITIONS OF TOOLS FOR POETRY AND ANALYSIS, NOTES ON
 ROBINSON'S LIFE, AND A LIST OF POEMS ON "SUCCESSFUL LIVING." A
 FIVE-PAGE BIBLIOGRAPHY ON TEACHING AND VALUES IS PROVIDED. (LH)

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THE DISCOVERY ROUTE TO VALUES, VIA LITERATURE

The synopsis of a conviction and a theory
and a sample unit of that theory
applied to a tenth-grade literature unit.

"RICHARD CORY" and Success

by

Virginia T. LeSueur

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PROLOGUE

Barbara Tuchman was discussing the writer of history when she listed as vital to his success a belief in the "grandeur" of his theme and a sense of addressing an audience whom he would like to stir into sharing that belief. (Tuchman, 1967, p. 30)

This writing is not history, but if it were, this writer would meet at least these qualifications for success. For I do believe in the grandeur of my theme. I do feel that I am speaking to an audience, and to a specific one. And I do want that audience to feel as I do about this theme.

The theme for which I allow so mighty a descriptive noun? That teachers of English have a unique opportunity--and hence a unique responsibility--to help shape Tomorrow by their influence on the values of Today's students. And the audience? Teachers of English whose choice it is to ignore, use, or misuse that opportunity.

SYNOPSIS OF THESIS*

As the Prologue forewarns, this writer holds training in "valuing" to be an integral part of a teacher's responsibility, and measures the significance of the teacher's "partnership in creation" not by his proficiency in transferring facts but by his commitment to and skill in implementing wisely-considered judgments--that is, by his allegiance not to Knowledge but to Wisdom by means of knowledge.

*Chapter I, "Why and Who?" begins "Everybody agrees that somebody ought to do something about young people's values!", oppugns the generality, and then offers evidence to support that statement's refinement to "In the light of America's contemporary social conditions it is the opinion of many psychologists, philosophers, educators, and laymen that unless value-instruction is incorporated into the teaching-process, not only will individuals fail to live successfully but democracy itself will fail.

Chapter II seeks an answer to "In General, How?" and finds evidence to support a hypothesis: that a sound plan for value-instruction would evolve if one built on opinions that values are derived from reflective thinking and critical investigation; considered and broadly exposed the humanities, as sources of insight and creative imagination; and at the same time focused on the "process of valuing," during the consideration of these humanities, by providing as many opportunities as possible for thinking critically about values--always, however, with total freedom of choice, by means of the Discovery Process; thereby creating the climate considered ideal for intuition--for "reason in a hurry"--which has been called "the most valuable coin of all."

Chapter III is a sober consideration of the influence of a teacher's own values: of what a teacher is or is becoming. Chapter IV points to the

*Chapter indications refer to the entire thesis, by Virginia T. LeSueur and titled "Valuing, Literature, and the Teacher of Secondary English (1968), which is available on Library Loan through Reis Library of Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania 16335.

possibility of unique implications for teachers of English. And Part Two then presents a series of tenth-grade literature presentations which follow the Discovery route and which integrate the process of valuing. (Examples from these nine units follow this preamble.) The work closes with a quotation:

Instead of giving young people the impression that their task is to stand a dreary watch over ancient values, we should be telling them the grim but bracing truth that it is their task to re-create those values continuously in their own time. . . . The moral order is not something static. . . . it is a living, changing thing . . . and never any better than the generation which holds it in trust. . . . A society is continuously re-created, for good or ill, by its members. This will strike some as a burdensome responsibility, but it will summon others to greatness. (Gardner, 1963, pp. 126-127)

Added is the comment that in the hands of teachers--perhaps particularly in the hands of teachers of English--may lie the influence which will decide whether this continuous re-creation now moves toward good or toward ill. And, following the units, is an Epilogue which speaks for itself.

Pages 93-104, 118-124, and Appendix G of Virginia T. LeSueur's thesis, "Valuing," Literature, and the Teacher of Secondary English, comprise this report.

CHAPTER XIII

POETRY AND VALUING

All literature exists to communicate an experience--to invite the reader's participation in it. Hence it can both broaden and deepen the reader's experience; but poetry, by its concentrated use of all the resources of language, potentially can communicate more intensely whatever experience its creator would have the reader share. The purposes of poets are, of course, as varied as their experiences. Certainly it was not all written to point a moral or cry a cause or ask questions about values--and a teacher who reserved it for this purpose would betray both poetry and his students. However, within a wholesome variety, poetry which asks value-questions will lend its intensity to them, as well; hence, for the deepening of experience, it seems potentially a more effective tool than prose.

Any high school text book abounds in poetry which speaks of values. Skim tenth-grade inclusions at random and what does one find? Here is "The Storekeeper" by George Abbe, whose subject is a man who loves people, who uses his business to cultivate friends, who measures his profit in warm, human relationships. He is content. In a humble setting he has learned to live successfully.

I: Why is he content? He certainly doesn't make much money. Isn't he stupid to stay in such a place instead of "getting ahead"?

Move on to the "Ticket Agent," by Edward Leamy. If the storekeeper proved that life is what you make it, the ticket agent, by his immunity to the human beings he serves and by his inability to see a ticket as anything more than a stub of cardboard, proves that life fails to be any more than you make it.

I: What could he have made of his job? Perhaps he was envious--so just pretended he didn't care about faraway places? If so, what was the result?

And then there is "Old Susan," by Walter de la Mare. Old--after a lifetime of nursemaiding and housekeeping--yet reading a Romance.

I: How idiotic. Dreams are for the young. Or are they?

Kipling's "The Ballad of East and West" is here, too. When (well) read aloud [the teacher who "aspires" will probably have checked himself on tape before he presents this longer-than-usual piece: such a tape can be illuminating], this is a great favorite. Explication afterwards can certainly broaden the experience; but the major depth perception--that nobility of spirit is an international language--will have been felt even before it was quite understood; and the refrain, so easy to remember, may stay available for their articulation of the theme in years to come:

But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, though they come
from the ends of the earth!

It may be that such poems, already tuned to the curriculum by their choice for textbook inclusion, will meet all needs. On the other hand, they may not. But one of the blessed conveniences of poetry is the ease with which one can choose it for particularized need and setting, and so "fine-tune" its meaningfulness. Perhaps textbook choices do not challenge as they should; or, conversely, they are too complex; or the subject-matter offers no point of reference with existing experience. Perhaps a novel has created lively interest in an area which the text-book inclusions could not be farther from. How simple (and advisable) it is to substitute poetry for which an appetite has already been aroused.

A teacher interested in values will have created such an appetite, in all likelihood, in pursuit of an answer to "What is Success?" Santiago's "success" is doubtless in precarious balance, at best; and Atticus may also have been unconvincingly garbed for a success-figure. Perhaps poetry can, by a

look at luxuriously appareled failure, lessen resistance to the acceptance of success in homespun.

Perhaps Richard Cory could lend a hand? Redman says Edwin Arlington Robinson's "Richard Cory" builds up to a very cheap ending "no more than a snap of the whip, reminiscent of . . . O. Henry" (1926, p. 38); but many sound critics disagree--including students. Let Richard help, then.

One might start without mentioning poetry, with a request for a paraphrase of the words in paragraph form, as they appear on page 2 of Appendix G. Come the morrow, exchange papers at random, so that each student gets to read several; then, via student nominations, have several read aloud and from these choose one for the board.

I: Sue, share that lovely handwriting of yours, will you, and put Mike's paraphrase on the board for us? In the meantime, how about some of you telling me what you think of when I say the word glitter.

S: Sequins. Sun on metal--perhaps armor. "All that glitters is not gold." A gold evening bag.

I: Interesting. All the dictionary says is "to sparkle with light," yet you see things when I say the word! Incidentally, the things you see are all hard surfaces, aren't they? Well, now, let's read Mike's paraphrase again. . . .

It's good, isn't it? And now, let's read Mr. Robinson's version again. . . .

Hm. . . . Here we have two people saying almost exactly the same thing. Both are good. Yet I, at least, react to them differently. Do you? Here is a hard question indeed: can you explain the difference between these reactions? Reread your copy of Mr. Robinson's version and try to put that difference into words.

This will be a hard question to answer. But someone is fairly certain to mention that he just "feels" differently about them, and that word feel can be used as a lever to pry open the door to recognition of the reader's (at least slightly) greater emotional involvement in the one than in the other.

I: It's doggone hard to put feelings into words, isn't it!

Strange. Remember, glitter denoted one thing but meant more? This, of course, was through the strength of connotation. But now one whole set of words seems to "mean more." I wonder why. Can we discover why? Both sets,

after all, are just words stuck together, aren't they? And each set has the same denotation. Yet here a whole set of words has, somehow, an added dimension. I wonder how Mr. Robinson did it. Let me read this to you again

Since the teacher will have cheated a little before, and understated the rhythm, this second reading just might provide the first recognition of the piece as poetry--thanks to the careful naturalness of the poet's word order and the artful simplicity of vocabulary and statement. Give them a minute, after this recognition, to delineate its poetic shape before putting the poem on the overhead projector for them.

I: Yes, it is poetry. Now perhaps it will be easier to point out some differences. Use your sheets of poetic tools, if you like (Appendix G, pp. 3-6).

Rhyme, meter, and form will come easily (and be identified as they are)--and perhaps even the resemblance of the two-line closing to that of a Shakespearean sonnet (with its invitation to once more point out the rhetorical advantage of end-positions generally).

I: It seems logical to infer, then, that rhythm and pattern influence the emotions, wouldn't it--since this version seems more emotionally charged than Mike's paraphrase. Can you think of evidence to support this inference?

Folk-singing teen-agers certainly ought to be able to; and one can take it back from there to their infancy and all the way back to primitive civilizations, with a stop-over at medieval minstrels.

I: And except for humorous verse, what do the topics of all poetry have in common? No. That's badly put. Let's put it this way: except for compulsion (by some miserable English teacher, perhaps) what would motivate you to write a poem or a song--which is poetry too, you know.

S: Love. Hate. War. Grief. Beauty. Fear.

I: Strong feelings, in every case. Emotions again.

It seems one just isn't likely to sing a dictionary definition. One just doesn't put into verse or song just plain, cold facts. Always there is feeling behind its creation. We seem pretty safe in assuming, then, that Mr. Robinson felt strongly about something when he wrote this poem, and that somehow he has managed to communicate some of that feeling to the reader. We are looking at several proofs that Mr. Robinson thought it was important to say this. What are those proofs?

S: He went to the trouble of working out careful meter, rhyme, and thought sequence--plus dramatic emphasis on the last two lines.

I: Yes, he did "take pains." More pains than most people know [insert here a sympathetic narrative of Robinson's life (see Appendix G, p. 7), with emphasis on his apparent failure but dogged persistence in doing what he felt he was meant to do--like Santiago, by the way].

Meter, rhyme, and thought sequence. These must be what it takes, then, to create a feeling that prose doesn't create. I wonder.

Look for a minute at Ebenezer Scozochi (Appendix G, p. 8) here on the overhead projector. It tells exactly the same story. It has the same rhythm, the same rhyme pattern, and the same thought sequence. How do you feel about this version? How does it make you feel? If differently, I wonder why?

The answer, when induced, refined, and defined, is to be found in Tone and Diction--both in the realm of values, yet both the legitimate concern of prosody. The students will readily feel the difference in attitude between the two writers. Ebenezer's chronicler seems almost unaware of the irony of his subject's situation, and unmoved by the discovery of his suicide. Colloquial language; disjointed sentences; word choices seemingly governed only by meter, rhyme, and haste. The contrast will be felt.

T: Yes, it's easy to recognize that these two writers feel quite differently about their subjects. Ebenezer's creator doesn't really care about this tragedy at all. He doesn't say so, but we know it anyway, and the difference we feel is called Tone. It is like a speaker's tone of voice, which gives away how he feels, even more than what he says. Somehow this comes through even with words on paper. Robinson, though, feels deeply about this tragedy. He doesn't say so. But we know this, too.

It's a rather sobering thing to realize that the words one uses can connote so much more than they denote. Two sets of words can denote the same thing, yet really mean two quite different things.

Did it ever occur to you that this fact is an important part of the reason you are here? Communicating truly both denotation and connotation so that you may say what--and all--you really mean doesn't just happen. It takes caring--and intuiting--and training--and failing--and trying again--and just plain sweat. But O the difference that pellucid (isn't that a nice word? it means "clearer than clear") and cogent (that means "forceful, appealing") communication

can make! To you. To those around you. To both personal and public events.

Yes, it is easy to recognize that these two writers feel quite differently about their subjects. It is easy to feel that Mr. Robinson is emotionally involved with his. Yet he doesn't once tell us that he is. Why didn't he, I wonder? Why did he, instead, seem to bend over backward to simply state the facts in what seems an almost detached manner? Even the last two lines!

This will take some coaxing, some rephrasing, and some inducing, doubtless. The recognition of intentional understatement is the target, of course--and of its contribution to dramatic impact and to transferral of feeling. Had he said how he felt, only denotation would have been transferred.

I: Yes, he has intentionally used understatement, just to "shock" us into feeling more strongly. He is doing his best to make us feel as he feels. And poetry, with its extra "tools" for arousing the emotions has advantages over prose, in this respect. Because poetry involves the emotions of an experience, we say it synthesizes experience--whereas prose analyzes experience for us. The first we feel; the second we merely understand. This is true of all the Arts, each with its different set of tools. They appeal to men's hearts, as well as to their minds. That is why they are so needed. Beauty in all its forms not only combats despair but helps men to "endure" and to "prevail," which Mr. Faulkner, for one, felt to be an artist's obligation.

Words and their ordering are both the poet's raw material and his tools. We have looked at the way Mr. Robinson has "ordered" his words when we examined meter and rhyme and understatement. We've recognized that his choices of words are more skillful than these of Ebenezer's creator. I wonder now if you can ferret out why.

Why, for example, do you suppose he said "from sole to crown" instead of "from head to toe"?

If this does not evoke a regal image, try another. But if it does, let them find other regal connotations and images: clean favored; imperially slim; arrayed; glittered; richer than a king; admirably schooled; grace.

I: And why "on the pavement" rather than "on the sidewalk," for example?

S: Were they on the street to let him pass? Was he perhaps riding, while others walked?

I: All we can fairly be sure of is that the townsfolk felt themselves somehow "lower" than Richard Cory.

And what does Robinson accomplish by having his spokesman say "he was always human when he talked"?

S: It implies the speaker's inclination to consider him superior, perhaps godlike.

I: And why "schooled" rather than "trained" or some other word?

S: Would it imply rigid self-discipline, perhaps? Perhaps doing obediently what he has been taught is the way royalty behaves, rather than permitting himself for naturalness?

I: For twelve lines, image after image, connotation after connotation, Mr. Robinson plants in our mind the concept of a king--almost a god--and our minds obediently build pictures around his words, whether we realize it or not! And they build just the pictures Mr. Robinson wanted us to see--because he "took pains" to see that it happened that way. He did something else, too, that was pretty tricky. He did it with just two letters. What two?

S: WE.

I: Funny thing about that. Whom do you think he meant by we?

S: Someone will get it. He means himself and us!

I: Yes, with just two letters he "pulls us into the act," practically insisting that we participate in this experience with him! We "on the pavement" look at him--(and how skillfully he tells us just what we are to see, with him, all those twelve, carefully-developed lines of specific support for his topic statement). After which we worked, and waited . . . and went without." (Do you suppose he alliterated the w just to emphasize the we?)

Yet we get only two terse lines. I wonder why?

S: To indicate relative unimportance, in the speaker's mind?

I: And then, without even starting a new sentence, just two lines tell us that on a calm summer night Richard Cory, this kingly god who had everything, no longer wanted it! Why a calm night, by the way, for such an uncalm act? And why no new sentence?

S: More dramatic contrast between appearance and fact; between outward calm but inner despair. The semicolon, rather than a period, leads us to expect more on the same topic--hence the shock of a new and totally unexpected development is intensified.

I: Glory be! Who ever would have thought just punctuation could make a difference in the way a reader felt! Perhaps, if we care about how we make people feel, these tiny symbols deserve a little more respect than they sometimes get?

Well, now. Look at your poetry sheets again for a minute

(Appendix G, pp. 3-6). Robinson has used many of the poetic tools listed here, but he seems to have overlooked the two figures of speech most familiar to us. What are they?

S: The metaphor and simile.

I: With all the pains he has taken with diction, is it reasonable to suppose this omission was accidental? If not, why did he avoid them?

S: Everyday speech doesn't use them much, and the commonplace words make the dramatic closing more believable because less "authored."

I: I guess, then, that just using poetic tools is not what creates fine poetry, either. As in any skill, it is in learning, by tedious practice, to use the right tools at the right time. Only then can the poet intensify meaning so that his readers experience it with him and end up feeling as he does. Ebenezer's creator, and Mike, for different reasons, did not have this aim. But Mr. Robinson would not have worked so painstakingly on "Richard Cory" had he not wanted to make us think about something he felt was important enough to be worth the trouble. Tell me, please, what you think that was.

S: "All is not gold that glitters." "You can't tell a book by its cover." We don't know when we're well off. "Appearances are deceiving." These clichés are inevitable.

I: These are logical conclusions. Yet I wonder if we can't think of other possibilities. Remember when we talked about the word glitter we mentioned that only hard things glitter? (The word itself has hardness about it, do you notice? When a word reflects its meaning in its sound, it is called symbolic sound--and that, too, is a poetic tool. Believe me, a poet's job is a strenuous one! There are so very many skills to learn.) We mentioned armor as one thing that can glitter. Does this suggest another possibility for what Mr. Robinson was trying to convey to us?

S: That something hard separated Richard Cory from the townspeople? It must have, because they obviously never suspected how he was feeling, behind that "armor."

I: What created that armor--that barrier between him and the people around him?

S: His wealth.

I: Wrong. Try again.

S: The effect that wealth had on people. Richard might have created the barrier himself, by feeling superior to the townspeople. But more probably the townspeople created it by their envy--or by their feeling that he was somehow not human like they were. Whatever it was, it had created a barrier between them. Richard Cory didn't "belong." He was isolated as a result of his wealth.

I: Tell me. Is this poem just about one man named Richard Cory?

S: No. About any man out of touch and about any men who stand and look and don't see.

I: It's about us again, isn't it? Mr. Robinson is just using Richard Cory to symbolize any man who appears to have everything and who appears serene but is actually finding life intolerable. This is a "universal" situation.

But of course it doesn't apply to us here. There's no one around us like that; nor are we anything like those townsfolk who had no idea that Richard was unhappy. . . . There's no one here who could be in despair without our ever suspecting it . . . ?

The misery of anyone separated from those around him (by money, poverty, color, ugliness, deformity) was something we examined pretty closely in To Kill a Mockingbird, and it seems to me about the saddest thing that could happen to any human being. For this reason I believe one must try with everything that is in him to discover and to care about the real person somewhere behind any kind of armor. I would like to think that Mr. Robinson wrote this poem to tell us to do this.

But from things I've read by him and about him, I don't think he did. In answer to a critic who called him pessimistic he wrote that he considered the world a kind of "spiritual kindergarten" where "millions of bewildered infants are trying to spell God with the wrong blocks" (Redman, p. 33). What does that metaphor mean?

S: Man wants to learn to live successfully, he has not yet gained the wisdom to learn how to do it.

I: Nor does Mr. Robinson tell us how. What he does do, though, is use his skill to make so memorable something like this "failure of Success" that it is like saying sternly: "Think about this!" And maybe we should think about Richard Cory when we envy someone. At any rate, because of Robinson's skill, we do think about it! We do care. Then we wonder why it happens. And perhaps someone who wonders will come a little closer to "finding the right blocks to spell God," just because a poet took such painstaking care with words that he was shocked into thinking about it.

Tell me this: would you have preferred that he give you advice? That he tell you how to live? If he had, what would you have done about it?

S: Probably let it go in one ear and out the other. Who is he to tell me how to live?

I: Maybe he felt that way, too. Maybe that's why he didn't offer any suggestions. I agree that no one should impose his definition of success on any one else. But I do say that anyone with his wits about him will give

pretty sober attention to creating a definition of his own! It doesn't quite make sense (that's an understatement, by the way) to spend a lifetime getting to where Richard Cory was! Better we should each find a definition with a little happier promise.

By the way, I didn't sell to all of you my conviction that Santiago was a success. Was Richard Cory? Was Edward Arlington Robinson? We'll talk about it another day.

Another day, not too far removed, one might pick up where "Richard Cory" left off.

I: Tell me, what did you decide about Richard Cory's and Edwin Arlington Robinson's success?

Whatever the responses--and preferably they will vary--demand specific reasons for them. By every strategy, insist that any student demand much more of himself than inherited or absorbed opinion. What makes him believe this? How long did it take him to come to this conclusion? Did he consider any other alternative? Do you mean that . . . ? Etc. The book Values and Teaching includes several pages of clarifying responses (Raths et al., 1966, pp. 63-65) which are splendid "insisters" that students scrutinize closely the bases of their judgments and preferences in the area of values.

I: One can not be certain about it, can one? Even when one thinks about it as clearly as he knows how. Maybe a look at some other comments related to living successfully will help, and that's why I've given each of you a group of poems--including a copy of "Richard Cory" in its proper form (Appendix G, pp. 8-14).^{*} By the way, among them you will find another poem of Robinson's. The title is again the name of a man (you will recognize the type, I'm sure). It is based on another of Robinson's Maine neighbors. (There are more for you to meet, by the way, should you want to.)

Just read these poems, until you feel you understand at least the denotation clearly. Then think about each as it may (or may not) relate to a definition of what successful living is, and compile your conclusions on the sheets I have prepared for the purpose (Appendix G, pp. 15-16).

There are, of course, no right or wrong answers. Conclusions about a question so crucial that any answer to it

^{*}If desired, two longer poems which might logically be included with this group are Frost's "Two Tramps in Mud Time" and Tennyson's "Ulysses."

will influence how you "spend" the rest of your life must be your thinking, not another's; but just because such conclusions will influence the rest of your life, it's mighty important that you give that thinking your best attention, not just once, but constantly.

On this size question you will want to seek advice from all sources--and education will make you increasingly selective about what sources of advice you trust. But literature is one place to look for suggestions. If that literature has survived for a good many years, the chances are that it carries in it some essence of unchanging Truth; and because of its intensified language, poetic literature is a better source than most for intuited Truth. (Intuition does play a part, don't you think? Some people would call it Conscience.)

As I said, you will in your lifetime want to seek advice and inspiration from many sources, but the responsibility for deciding what is worth giving your life to and for is all and solely yours

Except for neatness and adherence to instructions, these papers will not be graded. I will, however, be watching for outstandingly perceptive comments that should be shared with classmates.

Obviously, the results of this assignment could be handled in many ways and in whatever depth curriculum goals, student interest, and teacher judgment warrant. The assignment could lead to further in-depth consideration of whatever work most whetted student interest. It could lead to in-depth value discussions, if the spark for one or more should flare, and from thence to a writing assignment. Or it could end with merely a compilation, by the teacher, of comments on just one poem where diversity or conflict of opinion is particularly evident, followed by an informal debate on the points of disagreement--once again with insistence on specific support for opinion and the demand that a student scrutinize searchingly any opinion offered and any conclusion drawn. Other reading which students have done should make its contribution, too, on the way to such (ever tentative) conclusions.

Even with minimum follow-up, however, the assignment should make contributions not to be scorned: a small expansion of students' poetic acquaintance; a glimpse of common elements among diverse poets; a look at values; and an exercise in

discernment. It seems likely that in the process students will have considered the probability that SUCCESSFUL LIVING IS some or all of the following:

- being aware of natural beauty;
- being able to whistle;
- being content with humble things;
- being free from envy;
- being able just to sit still;
- responding naturally to instincts;
- having a mind that is "fearless and thirsty and supple";
- being willing to admit error--even about religion;
- being able to smile; and
- working at something you love.

At the same time it is likely that they will have considered the probability that SUCCESSFUL LIVING IS NOT

- merely a matter of being wealthy;
- merely a matter of being poor;
- doing nothing;
- complaining and criticizing;
- living in the past;
- blaming fate for one's problems;
- drinking instead of doing;
- achieving power;
- chasing the horizon;
- conforming to "everybody does it";
- "getting and spending";
- acquiring honors;
- merely overcoming obstacles;
- merely daring.

This is, in fact, no mean banquet of food-for-thought. Yet it is a legitimate child of literary appreciation: style in living can be the offspring of style in literature.

EPILOGUE

I once had as a student-teacher a twenty-seven-year-old veteran, father of two, with close to an A-average in all his course work. He could (and did) quote, almost verbatim, such authorities as Plato or Pope or Descartes or Dewey whenever an opinion was requested.

Yet when asked for an opinion of his own, he was at a loss to respond.

And he had planned, for tenth-grade English students, daily lectures spiced with examinations.

In an effort to stir him to a new concept of the word teacher (and in lieu of shaking him physically), I one day asked whether it had ever occurred to him that what he this day did, or said--or failed to do, or say--could influence the world's future.

Though he accused me of sending chills up his spine, I somehow felt he hadn't really "heard" me.

One day much later, after my own students had been exploring the possibility that each man is morally obligated to contribute to the future of all men, I asked him whether he was planning to make such a contribution. He answered with a question.

"Isn't it a contribution just to be a teacher?"

Is it?

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APPENDIX G

"RICHARD CORY"

WORDS

1. Their SOUND: combination of tones and noises--with meaning (as contrasted with a singing tone).
2. Their DENOTATION: the dictionary meaning--and there are many.
3. Their CONNOTATION: what a word "suggests" beyond its denotation. Gained by association; by "the company it keeps."

IMAGERY

The representation through language of any of the five sense perceptions.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE (Tropes)

SIMILE: a comparison which is admittedly so, usually with like. For example, "The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold."

METAPHOR: a comparison which states that one thing is another. "Presentiment is that long shadow on the lawn Indicative that suns go down."

SYMBOL: something meaning more than its denotation. As "The Road", speaking of choices between roads, is speaking of choices in life's directions.

ALLEGORY: a narrative which has a second meaning below the surface one, as in Pilgrim's Progress. Or Aesop's Fables.

PERSONIFICATION: giving human attributes to the inanimate. For example, "Death stands above me."

APOSTROPHE: addressing someone absent, or something non-human, as though alive, present, and able to answer. "Suppose you were, you silly sea-gull?"
Could you explain it to your she-gull?"

METONYMY (or Synecdoche): using a related idea (or a part) for the whole. For example, paleface, the press, lend me an ear.

ANTITHESIS: a rhetorical figure in which sharply opposing ideas are expressed within a balanced grammatical structure. For example, "Worth makes the man, and want of it, the fellow."

PARADOX: an apparent contradiction which is nevertheless true. "Damn with faint praise"; "Poetry . . . tells us . . . something that can not be said."

OVERSTATEMENT (Hyperbole): saying more than one really means.

UNDERSTATEMENT: saying less than one really means.

IRONY (verbal): saying the opposite of what one really means, but without any intent to deceive. (There is also dramatic irony and irony of situation.)

ALLUSION: adding to meaning by referring to something familiar and thus, with few words, adding a "borrowed"

"Richard Cory"
POETIC TOOLS*

dimension. "Out, Out--", the title of Frost's poem about a child's death, are the beginning words of Macbeth's soliloquy about life and death.

TONE

How the speaker "sounds" as he says the words. His attitude toward what he is saying. Compares to tone of voice, in speech.

MUSICAL DEVICES (A and B below combine to produce the music of poetry.)

A. Choice and arrangement of sounds

1. Repetition

- a. ALLITERATION: the repetition of initial consonants.
- b. ASSONANCE: the repetition of vowel sounds.
- c. CONSONANCE: the repetition of final consonant sounds.

B. Rhyme

- 1. MASCULINE RHYME: when only one syllable rhymes.
Vex--sex.
- 2. FEMININE RHYME: when more than one syllable rhymes. Triple-cripple.

SOUND DEVICES (to reinforce meaning)

A. Words that suggest meanings

- 1. ONOMATOPOEIA: when words in some sense sound like what they speak of. Swoosh, tintinabulation of the bells.
- 2. PHONETIC INTENSIVES (or Symbolic Sounds): certain sounds that have come to almost connote their own meaning. Slither, moan, flicker.

B. Sounds chosen for effect

- 1. EUPHONY: created generally by vowels, giving a pleasant effect.
- 2. CACAPHONY: created often by explosive consonants and giving a rough, harsh effect.

C. Control of speed and movement of lines

Unaccented syllables can be spoken more rapidly, hence triple meter suggests more speed than duple syllables.

D. Control of sound and meter to emphasize important words
Done by alliteration, consonance, assonance, or rhyme; by placing such words before an instinctive pause in the flow of language; or by skillfully displacing them in the metrical pattern.

FORM

A. CONTINUOUS. Little or no regularity in length of line or stanza. Only slight formal design. In this category are included

- 1. BLANK VERSE: unrhymed Iambic Pentameter.
- 2. FREE VERSE: no regular meter or rhyme.

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- B. STANZAIC. In which the number of lines, the metrical pattern, and often the rhyme scheme are repeated.
1. RHYMED COUPLET: two consecutive lines which rhyme.
 2. HEROIC COUPLET: a couplet which contains a complete thought.
 3. TERCET: a three-line stanza.
 4. QUATRAIN: a four-line stanza. When in tetrameter, it is long meter; when in trimeter, short meter.
 5. SPENCERIAN STANZA: stanza of 9 lines--the first 8 iambic pentameter and the last iambic hexameter.
- C. FIXED FORMS
1. LIMERICK: used exclusively for humorous verse. Anapestic aa bb a.
 2. SONNET: 14 lines--iambic pentameter.
 - a. Italian: abbaabba (the Octave--usually giving the situation) followed by cdcdcd (the Sestet--giving the comment). Or cdecde.
 - b. Shakespearean (or Elizabethan): abab cdcd efef gg. Three quatrains and a concluding couplet.

SCANSION

Scansion is the means of describing the three units of poetic measurement:

- A. The kind of foot
1. IAMB: today Duple feet
 2. TROCHEE: daily
 3. ANAPEST: intervene Triple feet
 4. DACTYL: yesterday
- B. The kind of line (i. e. the # of feet)
- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Monometer | 5. Pentameter |
| 2. Dimeter | 6. Hexameter |
| 3. Trimeter | 7. Heptameter |
| 4. Tetrameter | 8. Octameter |
- C. The kind of stanza pattern. This is designated by using letters of the alphabet to denote lines which rhyme (as used to describe the limerick and sonnet above).

TYPES OF POETRY

- EPIC: an extremely long narrative poem. Lofty characters. A setting in the past. Majestic. Legendary rather than historic.
- BALLAD: a short narrative poem. Folk ballads were originally designed to be sung. Literary ballads are any story-telling poem.
- IDYLL: a delicate and lifelike sketch, originally of Greek life. For example, pastorals, poems of shepherds, etc.
- LYRIC: a poem which deals with thoughts and emotions rather than events.

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POETIC TOOLS*

ELEGY: an expression of person reflections.
ODE: a poem on a serious theme.

*Adopted from Sound and Sense by Laurence Perrine (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1956).

"Richard Cory"
EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON*

Born: Head Tide, Maine, 1869

Died: New York City, 1965

No distinctive talents as a boy.

Harvard 2 years then returned to Gardiner, Maine, the Tilbury Town of his early poems.

An apparent failure, like his characters Miniver Cheevy and Mr. Flood, but he wrote steadily until privately printed first book, in 1896.

When third book, Captain Craig, published in 1902 (age, 33) working as train checker in subway. Then Theodore Roosevelt became interested and offered him a sinecure and wrote a critical commendation for The Outlook.

In 1909 (age, 40), he resigned the custom house post [shades of Melville and Hawthorne].

From 1911 divided time between New York and the MacDowell colony in New Hampshire, supported by a legacy and a trust fund established by his friends.

Honors came gradually: a fiftieth birthday celebration by the New York Times Book Review in 1911, three Pulitzer prizes for the 1921 edition of Collected Poems, The Man Who Died Twice, and Tristram; various poetry prizes, honorary degrees, the Gold Medal of the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1929, and the posthumous award of the Medal of the International Mark Twain Society following his death in New York City.

Mastery of formal techniques--yet a sort of romantic realism which made him accessible to a public not usually eager for poetry.

*from Cyclopedia of World Authors, edited by Frank N. Magill (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1958), p. 910.

Poems to be used in considering the question, "What is Successful Living?"

"Miniver Cheevy" by Edwin Arlington Robinson

"Ozymandias" by Percy Bysshe Shelley

"I Saw a Man" by Stephen Crane

"The Unknown Citizen" by W. H. Auden

"The World is Too Much With Us; Late and Soon" by William Wordsworth

"Who's Who" by W. H. Auden

"May My Heart Always Be Open to Little" by E. E. Cummings

"Work is Love Made Visible" by Kahlil Gibran

"Richard Cory"
WHAT IS SUCCESSFUL LIVING?
 Student Comment Sheet

WHAT IS SUCCESSFUL LIVING?

A look at what a few poets
 have to say on related topics

 Name

 Period

 Date

From the poems listed below you may or may not draw some conclusions about what ingredients the poet believes contribute--or fail to contribute--to successful living. You may sense what he feels it is, what it is not, or both, or neither, in each poem. List attributes which he states or which you infer--in parallel form--so that, with the heading, each phrase completes a sentence. Be terse, but if you need more room, use the back of the paper; however, if you do, write the word over so that I will not miss it. As an example of form I have included two results of our thinking about "Richard Cory."

SUCCESSFUL LIVING ISSUCCESSFUL LIVING IS NOT

"Richard Cory"

merely the result of being wealthy.
 merely the result of being poor.

"Miniver Cheevy"

"Ozymandias"

"I Saw a Man"

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"Richard Cory"
WHAT IS SUCCESSFUL LIVING?
Student Comment Sheet

SUCCESSFUL LIVING IS

SUCCESSFUL LIVING IS NOT

"The Unknown Citizen"

"The World Is Too Much with Us; Late and Soon"

"Who's Who"

"may my heart be always open to little"

"Work is love made visible"